

WHEN I WAS EIGHT

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The school Margaret
attended in Aklavik

I knew many things when I was eight. I knew how to keep the sled dogs quiet while Father snuck up on caribou, and to bring the team to him after a kill. I knew the sun slept in the winter and woke in the summer.



And I knew that when the sun-warmed Arctic Ocean
shrugged off its slumbering ice, we would cross it to
trade furs with the outsiders.



But I did not know how to read the outsiders' books.
It was not enough to hear them from my older sister,
Rosie. I longed to read them for myself.

Although I begged like a hungry dog after scraps, Father
would not let me go to the outsiders' school, like Rosie.
He knew things about the school that I did not. But my
name is Olemaun (that's *OO-lee-maun*), the stubborn
stone that sharpens the half-moon ulu knife used by
our women.



